

❖ FRANK FIELDING ❖

Herbert Francis (Frank) Fielding was born in Brisbane in 1907, the son of Herbert and Rose Fielding, and grandson of John Fielding who was one of seven men to select blocks of land on Buderim in the 1870s. As a child, Frank lived at 'Clithero', the Fielding family farm in Buderim, attending Buderim Mountain State School, a one-teacher school at that time. He attended Brisbane Boys College for his secondary schooling and had decided, by then, that he wanted to be a farmer. At his parents' insistence, however, he started his working life in a Brisbane bank to gain experience in the world of business.



He returned to Buderim after five years in the banking industry to work on the family farm and to search for his own property. By the time he was 21, he was farming commercially with a dairy property at Curra, north-west of Gympie. At a later stage, he had a sugar cane farm at Bli Bli. Other ventures included growing commercial crops of bananas, pineapples, oranges, mandarins, beans, avocados and ginger at Buderim. He was involved with the Buderim Ginger Cooperative from its early days in the 1940s as a grower, director and deputy chairman.

Frank married Gladys Williamson in 1947 after five years of courtship. They built their home on Buderim's northern escarpment with views over cane fields and the mouth of the Maroochy River. Their farm, their faith and their church were central to their lives. Their community was also important to them and Frank gave his time to various organisations that contributed to community wellbeing. At one stage, he was secretary to seven.

At a time when communities like Buderim relied on the willingness of their members to manage vital services, Frank was District Fire Warden for many years. He was also a member of the committee that established the local ambulance service and its treasurer for 10 years. He was part of a committee that lobbied the State Government in the 1960s for the provision of a reticulated water supply for Buderim. He helped establish the Buderim Lawn Bowls Club. He was secretary/treasurer of the Buderim School of Arts Committee and a member of the Buderim Show Society. He was a talented sportsman with some creditable records with the Buderim Cricket Club to his name.

A stalwart of the Buderim Uniting Church, Frank helped manage its finances throughout his life and sang in its choir for a time with Gladys as choir accompanist. He also helped establish churches at Maroochydore and Mooloolaba.

While Frank and Gladys had no children of their own, they opened their home and hearts to their nieces and nephews during school holidays. Memories of those special times are still cherished by their nieces and nephews.

Gladys died in 1998, the year after their 50th wedding anniversary and Frank's 90th birthday. Despite the loss of Gladys, the resulting loneliness and his advanced years, Frank continued to live an independent, vital life for another 10 years. Always optimistic about the future, he bought a new ride-on mower when he was 99 and was still planting and tending his extensive garden at that time. Perhaps a legacy from his early banking experience, he was still maintaining his life-long interest in financial investing into his final years.

Frank Fielding died five weeks after celebrating his 100th birthday. Family and friends remember him for his humour, work ethic, wise counsel, generosity and humility. Fielding Street and Clithero Avenue in Buderim are named to honour the memory of three generations of Buderim's pioneering Fielding family – a tradition that spanned the history of commercial farming on Buderim. Frank Fielding's farm was the last such venture on Buderim.